

# Josephine County buys bill counter to handle pot cash

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) - The final straw was the day a marijuana grower came in to get a permit and paid for it with \$3,000 cash in \$5 and \$10 bills.

So many permits and fees were being paid for with marijuana money the Josephine County Community and Economic Development Department needed a bill counter.

It was a chore to count, staff said, and not necessarily safe, right out there on the front counter, with customers waiting.

"That started the whole thing," department

office manager Melissa Older said while demonstrating the machine's use.

It arrived a few weeks ago and is called a JetScan, made by Cummins Allison. Its price tag is nearly \$1,900. The county treasurer's office was consulted about what to buy.

Older said employees didn't feel comfortable counting out all that cash in public. Also, there was the desire to make sure all those bills were counted accurately.

The machine checks for counterfeit bills, too.

To get an idea about how much business the marijuana industry is doing with the county, department director Julie Schmelzer provided the following statistics:

Building fees collected by the building safety division jumped 61 percent, to \$541,863 during the most recent fiscal year, which concluded June 30, vs. \$332,039 last year;

Electrical fee collections jumped 80 percent over the same period, to \$154,467 from \$85,916;

Planning division fee collections jumped

64 percent: \$496,923 vs. \$302,149.

"That gives you some idea about money changing hands," Schmelzer said.

Not all of the increased revenue was due to marijuana-related development. Schmelzer said some is due to increased residential construction, as the economy continues to improve.

And business isn't slowing: This fiscal year, which began July 1, looks to be busier yet, she said.

"It's crazy."

## Healthy U News: by Nicole Rensenbrink

I used to go through my closet at the end of each season and either toss or take to a thrift store everything that I hadn't worn in ages. Then, I'd look at the new found space I had and, if I had the money, go shop for some clothes I hoped to like more. It was automatic: a leftover from being a growing child who didn't fit in the old stuff from one year to the next and excitedly awaited "Back to School Shopping" in late August or scoping out cute new bikinis as a young teen with spring fever.

I grew up and stayed largely the same size as an adult, but kept right on shopping. I got hooked on "fast fashion," the clothes I could easily afford because somewhere in China,

someone was getting paid 12-18 cents per hour to keep me in style. Not that I ever thought about that.

But, since I started picking up trash with the local Rotary Club, my thoughts about waste started to change. A lot of stuff becomes garbage and garbage has to go somewhere. Though most of it doesn't end up along the roadsides, stabbing dirty diapers along 199 made me think about how hideous it must be in giant landfills too.

So, I got motivated to cut down the trash I generate. I got better at recycling, composting, and avoiding extensive packaging. Then, I read about clothes. An article in *The Atlantic* from 2014 reported that

Americans generate about 10.5 million tons of clothes trash each year, of which just 15 percent is recycled.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information reports that the demand for man-made fibers, especially polyester, has nearly doubled in the last 15 years, according to figures from the Technical Textile Markets. The manufacture of synthetic fabrics is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releases toxic emissions which can cause or aggravate respiratory disease. Various by-products of polyester production go into the wastewater from polyester

manufacturing plants. The EPA, under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, considers many textile manufacturing facilities to be hazardous waste generators.

Even a natural fiber like cotton isn't problem free. The U.S. cotton crop accounts for a quarter of all the pesticides used in our country and we are the largest exporter of cotton in the world, according to the USDA. Subsidized by our government, cotton prices are kept artificially low, which enables fast fashion to clog up our closets.

All this has made me re-evaluate my relationship with clothes. First, most of my clothes are fine and will last for many years to come.

Next, if I do get some clothing article, or get gifted such, I could prize that possession more, mean it to last 30 years, rather than seeing it as just another sweater because I like sweaters and don't have one yet in purple. Finally, taking a lesson from Marie Kondo (*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*), by being more selective, I will take better care of my things more and have less clutter (trash of sorts) in my own home too.

A clean environment is healthy. It relaxes the mind and generates comfort. Fast fashion may be fun, but is the chaos it creates at home and toxic trash it creates in the world really worth it?

## CANNABIS ...

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If a vegetative screen is required then the screen must be maintained and capable of shielding a cannabis plant in three years. The ordinance further adds that shade cloth can no longer be used for more than three consecutive months and must be removed at the end of the season. Finally, and although front and road setbacks are still required, sight obscuring fences will no longer need side and rear yard setbacks.

All exterior lighting, as of Oct. 30, must be shielded through the use of a hood or lens to cast light downward and ensure that no light is cast onto neighboring properties or into the night sky. On the same beat, no indoor lighting from a cannabis production or processing facility can be visible to neighbors or in the

night sky.

Lastly, with regards to erosion and runoff, if fill is brought onto, or stockpiled, on a property in excess of 10 cubic yards, then its runoff must be maintained on-site through "best management practices." Although it was addressed as a concern, further definition regarding "best management practices" was declined. In addition, filling or grading on slopes in excess of 15 percent without a Stormwater Management Plan will not be permitted and berms have to meet the same setback as a structure and need to be stabilized with ground cover.

Hare, speaking toward the recent round of cannabis regulation, said that the county is doing their best with thinly stretched resources and personnel to make the cannabis market a good thing for everyone. Although he appreciates the community's

fervent engagement and patience on the topic he added that very few growers, both medical and recreational, had come to him seeking his advice and opinion as to where he thought land use code was going in the future. As such, and although he does feel empathy for growers, he does not feel entirely responsible for their potential loss of investment.

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